

The President's Daily Brief

11 November 1971

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

On *Page 1* we comment on the assassination yesterday of South Vietnamese politician Nguyen Van Bong.

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British Foreign Secretary Douglas-Home is going to Rhodesia in an effort to settle the independence dispute. (Page 3)

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SOUTH VIETNAM

Nguyen Van Bong, who was killed yesterday in Saigon by a bomb explosion in his automobile, was one of the country's most effective and respected politicians. He was the leader of the Progressive Nationalist Movement, one of the few Vietnamese political parties with organizational strength outside the capital and one which did fairly well in the recent National Assembly elections. Bong had been rumored as a possible selection for prime minister in the event that President Thieu decided to broaden his government through a cabinet reorganization.

Bong's assassins have not been identified, but suspicion is falling on the Communists since he had no known political or personal enemies. Although there is no obvious reason why the Communists might single out Bong, they have conducted similar acts of terrorism in the past, primarily to demonstrate that security in Saigon is still precarious.

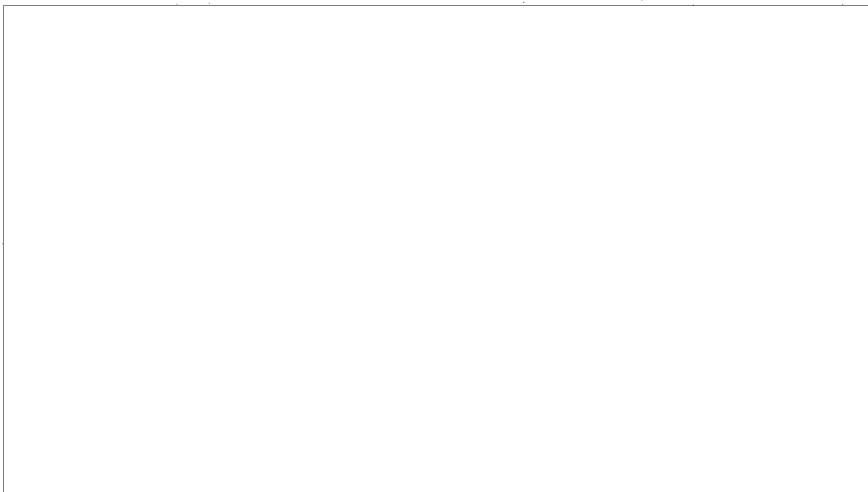
The Progressive Nationalist Movement had been following a course of moderate opposition since its establishment in 1968. Its line is not likely to change much as a result of Bong's death, although the party's number two man, Nguyen Ngoc Huy, is considered to be somewhat more sympathetic to the government.

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UK-RHODESIA

Heath is sending Foreign Secretary Douglas-Home to Salisbury on Sunday in fulfillment of his election campaign pledge to try to settle the six-year-old Rhodesian independence dispute.

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preliminary negotiations over the past several months have not advanced as far as the government had hoped, but the Foreign Secretary's presence in Rhodesia apparently is believed necessary to advance the talks further.

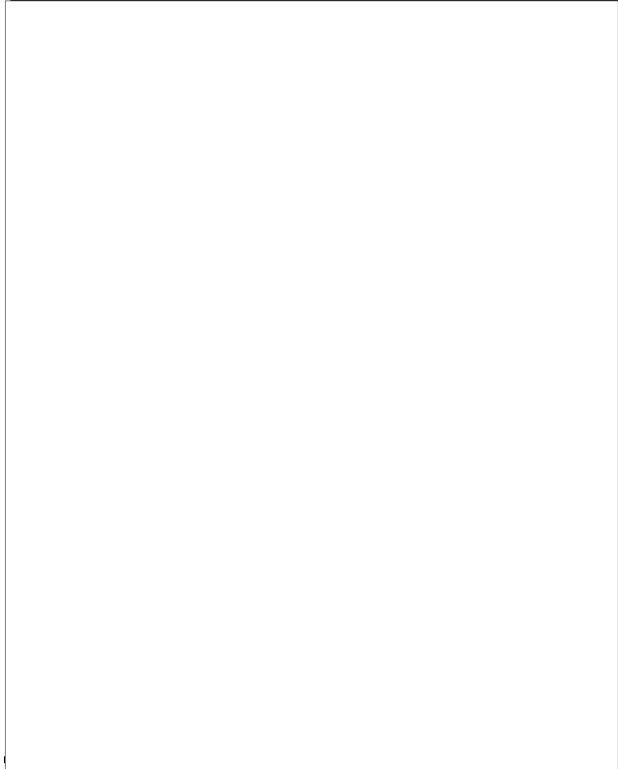
The major point to be settled is progress toward ending racial discrimination. The British still insist that any new agreement must provide for unimpeded progress toward majority, i.e., African rule. Although Rhodesian Prime Minister Smith, according to one report, wants a settlement because of economic problems, he has recently come under intense pressure from his own party to adopt even stricter racial segregation measures.

Heath may well believe that a Rhodesian settlement, or at least a demonstrated drive to attain one, will shore up his support among right-wing Tories, whom he wants to back legislation necessary to effect Britain's entry to the EC.

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